

Human Rights Council – 44th session
Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women
Panel 1: Accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings
13 July 2020
Australian Statement

We thank the panelists for their presentations.

We agree that accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings should not be limited to the punishment of perpetrators of violations, and must incorporate the full spectrum of gender-responsive policy design, monitoring and implementation.

Policies should respond to the increased risk of human rights violations faced by women and girls in humanitarian settings, including heightened risk of exploitation and sexual violence, and limited access to contraception and other sexual and reproductive health services.

The promotion and protection of all human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, is key to ensuring systemic accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings: it saves lives.

Women and girls face an increased rate of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings. Violence can be perpetrated in the context of armed conflict, but also behind closed doors, within communities and families. The current pandemic is increasing these risks. Accountability for such violations requires a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure prevention in all settings.

Placing women's and girls' experiences, perspectives and leadership at the heart of humanitarian action is also key. Mechanisms that allow women and girls to participate meaningfully in decision-making can assist in identifying and preventing human rights violations and abuses.

We welcome the panel's views on how States providing humanitarian assistance can support accountability for women and girls by working with local Governments and communities to ensure women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services.

243 Words